a campaign and adventure guidebook for

middle earth™

including the wild lands — east, south, & north

Contains a FULL COLOR 24″ × 36″ poster map



Based on J.R.R. TOLKIEN's THE HOBBIT™ and THE LORD OF THE RINGS™. Produced and distributed by Iron Crown Enterprises, Inc.

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CONTENTS

(1.0) INTRODUCTION

This guidebook is intended as an aid for those wishing to integrate J.R.R. Tolkien's Middle Earth into their fantasy role playing game. Essentially, it is a handy reference unit specifically oriented toward major fantasy role playing systems and the forthcoming Middle Earth series from ICE.

J.R.R. Tolkien's legacy is truly monumental; his works of fantasy are masterpieces of imagination - consistent, thorough, colorful, stirring and, most of all, thought provoking. Each of us who has delved into his world has developed his or her own impressions of the flora, fauna, and landscape, and has built upon these conceptions by wondering about those things that received relatively little, or no, attention in the texts and appendices. This syndrome has spawned this work and fantasy role playing series. It is all intended to provide a working base for creative minds who enjoy the world of Middle Earth and have long wished to venture out into its lands, discover new ways, experience its flavor, and build upon its wondrous structures and settings. The entire tone of ICE's approach is aimed at those who want a foundation from which to work, not necessarily absolutes.



(2.0) THE SOURCES

Tolkien's Middle Earth has been documented by a variety of commentators, including his son Christopher. Certain aspects of the world and its associated histories are described in immense detail, while others remain shrouded in varying degrees of uncertainty. Most commentaries center on the West (actually the Northwest) of Endor, the middle continent of Arda, and give little or no space to outlying regions, aside from examining incursions of invaders or noting the vague activities of the Dark Lord. When handling events and settings in the East, North, or South, then, one is very much on his own. The only rules of thumb to abide by are: (1) derive an understanding of "western activity" and the overall world setting; and (2) make sure your research shows no conflict with the sparse data found in primary sources, the actual writings of J.R.R. Tolkien and those edited by his son Christopher. Adventures set in the West, however, are necessarily more restricted.

A complete bibliography is provided in Section 10.0. What follows is a brief list of the most helpful primary and secondary sources which will prove invaluable for any Middle Earth fantasy role playing (FRP) game:

Primary Sources:

Tolkien, J.R.R. *The Fellowship of the Ring*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1965. Copyright© 1965 by J.R.R. Tolkien.

___________. *The Hobbit*. Revised Edition. New York: Ballantine Books, 1966. Copyright© 1937, 1938, 1966 by J.R.R. Tolkien.

___________. *The Return of the King*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1965. Copyright© 1965 by J.R.R. Tolkien.

___________. *The Silmarillion*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1977. Copyright© 1977 by George Allen & Unwin Ltd.

___________. *The Two Towers*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1965. Copyright© 1965 by J.R.R. Tolkien.

___________. *Unfinished Tales*. Boston: Copyright© Houghton Mifflin Co., 1980. Copyright© by George Allen & Unwin Ltd.

Secondary Sources:

Fonstad, Karen Wynn. *The Atlas of Middle Earth*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1981. Copyright© 1981 by Karen Wynn Fonstad.

Foster, Robert. *The Complete Guide to Middle Earth*. New York: Ballantine Books, 1978. Copyright© 1971, 1978 by Robert Foster.

Tyler, J.E.A. *The New Tolkien Companion*. New York: Avon Books, 1978. Copyright© 1976, 1978 by J.E.A. Tyler.

This work is based on *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*, particularly the appendices from *The Return of the King*, the third volume of the trilogy. Great pains have been taken to assure no conflict with any other primary source material. Since the material in ICE's series is derived from the histories of the Third Age, *The Lord of the Rings* stands as the most instrumental resource.

The Silmarillion and *Unfinished Tales* may provide crucial data for campaigns set in the First or Second Ages of Middle Earth. The former is certainly key to any in-depth cosmological overview. ICE's Middle Earth line is aimed at settings of a later period, but will, nonetheless, prove helpful to those concerned with earlier times.



(3.0) DEFINITIONS AND TERMS

The majority of unique terms and translations from *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* are not described below; rather, they are to be found elsewhere in the text, in the sections concerning places, inhabitants, etc.

Character: See "player character."

First Age (1.A.): The first recorded Age of Middle Earth. Its beginnings date back to a period relatively soon after the dawn of time as we know it and its ending point was marked by the overthrow of Morgoth (the "Black Enemy"), Sauron's overlord and mentor. The tales of the First Age are, for the most part, found in J.R.R. Tolkien's *Unfinished Tales* and *The Silmarillion.* These works are not used or described within this guidebook, since we are focusing on the Third and Fourth Ages. ICE uses 1.A to denote the First Age and F.A. to indicate Fourth Age dates.

Fourth Age (F.A.): The fourth recorded age of Middle Earth, the "Age of Men." It began with the passing of the Three Rings over the sea. During the Fourth Age most of the elves departed Middle Earth for the Undying Lands; other non-mannish races such as dwarves and hobbits began to seek solitude, for their ways were no longer understood by the overlords of the continent - men.

Gamemaster (GM): Also known as DM or dungeonmaster, the referee, judge, etc. The ultimate authority in a given fantasy role playing game. This person is responsible for giving life to the game by monitoring world events and providing the necessary imaginative aids. He/she interprets rules, controls creatures and non-player characters, and maintains play.

God: Not the gamemaster, but Eru - the creator of the world, including Middle Earth.

Middle Earth: Endore; Endor; the Middle Land; the Middle Continent. One continental land mass found in the world. It was not itself the entirety of the world, although the action and events found in *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* is focused on the Third Age of Middle Earth and the very beginning of the Fourth Age of Middle Earth.

Non-player character (NPC): A being or creature interacting in a fantasy role playing game controlled ("run") by the gamemaster, player, or another, not as a character synonymous with a player, but as an entity who has no identity with a human participant. Since the NPC is not identified with anyone, its death or departure will not result in anyone leaving the game or having to generate a new character.

Player character (PC): A character or being controlled by and identified with one of the players. In the game context, the player character (PC) *IS* the player and vice versa.

Roll (D100): Normally a percentile dice roll giving random results from 01 to 100 (00).

Second Age (S.A.): The second recorded Age of Middle Earth. It began after the fall of Morgoth, with the founding of the Grey Havens and Lindon. The age ended in S.A. 3441, when Elendil and Gil-gilad overthrew Sauron, Isildur took the One Ring, and the Dark Lord and Nazgul passed into the shadows. S.A. is used denoting dates.

Third Age (T.A.): The third recorded Age of Middle Earth. It began following the defeat of Sauron as a result of the Last Alliance of Men and Elves and ended in T.A. 3021, when the Keepers of the Ring passed over the sea (from the Grey Havens). T.A. is the abbreviation.

Valar: Refers to primary Valar...fifteen (including Morgoth), and later, fourteen servants of Eru. Lesser "gods," demi-gods, entities consisting of pure spirit but often taking physical shape. Many of the peoples/beings in Middle Earth worship them or hold them sacred. Guardians of the world, it is they who sent the Wizards (Istari) to Middle Earth.

The West: Northwestern Middle Earth, specifically the area within which the events described in *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* took place. Loosely, the area from Umbar northward and west of the eastern shores of the Sea of Rhun.



(4.0) THE WORLD, AN OVERVIEW

(4.1) GEOGRAPHY/TOPOGRAPHY COMMENTARY

J.R.R. Tolkien's Middle Earth was a largely undefined continent in both geographical and cultural terms. What was thoroughly documented was the scene for the events that dominated the whole "life" of the land mass and its inhabitants - the struggle against Darkness centered in the Northwest; it was in that area that those of greatest power came to clash.

The undefined lands and their inhabitants are largely unknown. What is mentioned of them consists of brief, scanty references relating to the "vast East," or creatures and men "from the South," etc. We do know that the mumakil (elephants) came from the reaches south of the great desert (beyond that area of the Haradwaith) and necessarily came from an ecological niche conducive to their survival. Thus, we can reconstruct the region utilizing geological and meteorological patterns. There was a relatively lush region beyond the desert to the south of "Far Harad" which can be explained due to the weather patterns blocked by an intervening mountain range. Many of the Dark Lord's men came from the area, and its coast was explored and/or colonized by the great captains of Numenor.

We know the elves came out of the East and that a great number of their kind passed to the West during the First Age. Their journey led them to the northwestern area of Middle Earth. Later, mannish groups such as the Balchoth and Wainriders (both labels attached to migrating folk by the men of the West) came out of the East. They were from regions beyond Rhun and were probably under pressure from groups further east. Geographical considerations channeled them into the territory of Rhovanion and lands immediately north of Mordor. Thus, we can begin to get a picture of expansive eastern territories beyond Rhun whose geography (1) may have funneled groups through Rhun and toward Rhovanion; and (2) accounted for the great desert of Harad. There were mountains east of the desert and regions beyond them where Sauron's shadow took hold. They were described as "vast." West of these mountains and southeast of Mordor were the men of Khand. These folk had contact with the "easterlings," at least when the latter migrated westward, and were also dominated by the overlord of Mordor. Their attention, due to the power of the Shadow and their geographical boundaries, focused on the Dark Land.

Mordor's two mountain ranges, the Ephel Duath ("Mountains of Shadow") on the western and southern borders and the Ered Lithui ("Ash Mountains") which formed the northern border, can be explained by volcanic activity (plentiful in Mordor), and may have resulted from natural and/or Sauronic sources. Their connection as far as continental divide goes, however, was to an eastern mass, for the Anduin crossed between the White Mountains and Mordor. Mordor's mountains were connected to eastern highlands and/or plate activity (at least in part). Leaving a substantial gap for the flow of contact between Khand the plains south of the Sea of Rhun, we can recreate the flow of the mountains forming the eastern edge of the great desert - that which formed the range in terms of geological activity is connected with Mordor's Ephel Duath in part, and the two mountain chains appear to be a broken continuum.

Other specific standards, such as the reference to the Sea of Rhun being the largest "inland sea" in Middle Earth, enable the interpreting cartographer to judge the scale of formations, in this case lakes and freshwater "seas." The Ice Bay of Forachel was one portion of a "much larger bay." The cold wastes of the north extended artificially southward in the area of the lost realms of Arnor and Angmar, and one can judge this boundary as the southermost limit of consistently frigid weather.

We can, therefore, derive a viable interpretive view of the undefined or "wild" lands. These areas had limited "civilizing" influences, and were less dominant in cultural/political/military affairs, but comprised a significant portion of Middle Earth. After all, the West is described as being only the "northwestern part" of the land mass called Endore.

What follows is a description of the map of Middle Earth and the significant features which may dominate the flow of events. It is by nature interpretive, and the gamemaster may wish to take cautious liberties with certain aspects. Keep in mind that Tolkien's fascination with our own world led him to translate the Redbook and give us his great works. Middle Earth is in many ways like our beloved Earth, and many questions concerning aspects of Tolkien's works are best explained by using answers from his ultimate source. This is why a cartographer can use physical principles found in everyday life (at least for the most part). Also note that this mythos, being quite familiar to "normal reality," becomes all the more plausible - rich and believable.



(4.11) The Land

The land shown on the map is shaded according to certain criteria: (1) areas shown in deeper green are more rich and temperate than those in lighter shades, since the latter are semi-arid, highland, rocky, hot, or cold expanses (relatively speaking); (2) hills and mountains are given relative heights in terms of symbol sizes; (3) the continental shelf is in sea green or aqua; (4) the deep ocean is the area outside of the shelf and in a pronounced blue; and (5) the mountain coloring is meant to express the approximate appearance of the various ranges.

Mountain Ranges: Middle Earth's highest mountain range was the Misty Mountains of the Northwest. Although their height was apparently unexcelled on the continent in the Third Age, their width as a chain was not particularly great. In fact, certain central sections of the White Mountains (Ered Nimrais) were wider.

Both the Misty Mountains and the White Mountains were relatively tall and snow-capped. The mountains of Mordor (the Ered Lithui or "Ash Mountains" and the Ephel Duath or "Mountains of the Shadow") were without snow on the peaks due to lower height and their proximity to warmer temperatures. The cooler ranges of the Northwest, the Blue Mountains (Ered Luin) and the Grey Mountains (Ered Mithrin) were also lesser in vertical stature, but retained snow; at least in winter they had true snow fields.

The Mountains of the East were apparently substantial as far as height and have been represented accordingly. It was beneath their shadow that the Great Journey of the elves began. They are located in the far East.

The more central range bordering the eastern edge of the great desert is of a stature akin to the relatively nearby Ephel Duath of Mordor. In light of a pronounced lack of moisture on the western side of the range, the eastern side was quite a bit more lush and watered, receiving the near-entirety of the rain in the region. They were not snow-capped either; they were too low and located in hot lands.

Most mountain ranges have a relatively steep rise on one side with a gentler decline to the lowlands on the other side (e.g. the Rockies rise steeply out of the Colorado plain on the east and have a less brutal incline on the western side).

The more precipitous faces of the various ranges are shown on the following chart which outlines relevant highland data:

Range	Approx. Height	Snow	Precipitous face (one which drops most sharply)
Ash Mountains (Ered Lithui)	6,000	No	North
Blue Mountains (Ered Luin)	8,000	Yes	East
Central Range (Ered Ormal)	5,000+	No	East
Grey Mountains (Ered Mithrin)**	6,000	Yes	South
Misty Mountains (Hithaeglir)	13,000	Yes*	East
Mountains of the East	11,000+	Varies	East
Mountains of the Shadow (Ephel Duath)	6,000	No	West and South facing out from Mordor
Mountains of the South	7,000	No	North
White Mountains (Ered Nimrais)	11,000	Yes*	North

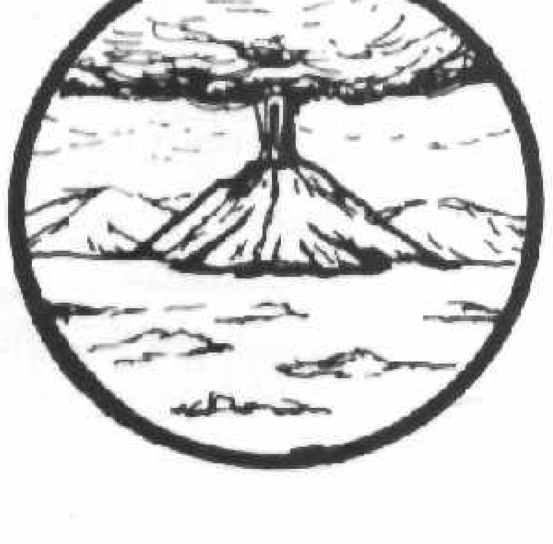
* Denotes substantial year-round snow fields and glaciers.
** Note that the Grey Mountains may have been a part of the ancient Iron Mountains of old. There is a good case indicating that they were actually a southern spur which included the Iron Hills.

The Great Desert: The vast desert region of Harad is an amazingly dominant feature, for it seems to have contributed heavily to the isolated nature of the well-documented West. Its character is akin to those deserts able to support limited, but not insigificant populations (trade and settlement are evident even in deep areas); nonetheless, it is an unkind expanse. In the eastern foothill areas alongside the mountains the land can support fair numbers, and the coastal refuges of Umbar and some of the southern bays frequented by the men of Numenor embrace fine town and port sites. Some of Sauron's great mannish servants no doubt hailed from the region. On the south side of the desert the Mountains of the South rise abruptly from the plain, leaving few major river systems or fine, moderate hill sites.

The Forests: The primary forest of old, of which Mirkwood and the Old Forest were a part once covered much of Middle Earth. Certainly the whole of the West was blanketed by the trees. It was a dense, mixed forest whose offspring seem to lean toward specialization (e.g. oak woods in one area, beeches elsewhere), but retain a varied character. Thus, one finds generally mixed forest throughout a band covering the central two thirds of the non-arid reaches of Middle Earth. The extensive taiga (coniferous forests) of our world are absent except in the far northeastern sections of the continent. This is due to the extreme cold that reaches far southward along most of the northern frontier, an artificial and/or almost enchanted situation which is a legacy of Morgoth's foul hand. Some regions normally covered by great conifers in Middle Earth were beset with perpetual cold. This plight was lessened when there was an absence of active malevolence (e.g. when Angmar was dormant), but remained a fixture.

Southern Mirkwood was uniformly coniferous and the rest of the forest was dominated by firs even though technically it is mixed. For this reason, it is represented by the pine symbol.

In the far south, beyond Harad and the mountains, live the mumakil. Their homeland, and indeed all the nearby areas, is interspered with mixed forest and jungle. The jungle tends to be confined to the humid lowland river valleys.



The Plains: Plains predominate in much of the East, North, and South. The central continent is relatively unbroken, and adds to the isolated character of the West. Extremely fertile areas may be present, but the limited technology of Easterlings made agriculture a true adventure. The region called Rhun is obviously well-watered and is an obvious site for at least occasional settlement, but it is still relatively insulated by expanses of high coarse grass or (as in the case of the area just north of Mordor) semi-arid plain. Grassy plains of varying types extend across the East between the central and eastern highlands. Northern tundra and ice plains lie north of the broken ranges that mark the polar boundary, as well as across the so-called "northern wastes" (occupied by, and also referred to as, Forodwaith).

Central Mordor is divided into two plains: Gorgoroth, which is actually a high and broken plateau, and Nurn and the reaches surrounding the sea of Nurnen. West and northwest of Mordor there are no great expanses of true plain; rather, the unforested lowlands are generally broken by rolling hills and occasional wooded stands. Before the great depopulation of these areas, much of the land was cultivated. Many of the hills are rather treacherous and extreme in their features while others, such as the "downs" found in Eriador and the Wold, are relatively gentle.

(4.12) The Water

Inland Water: The Sea of Rhun, at least during the Third Age, was the largest inland body of water in Middle Earth. It had no outlet to the sea. Most of the other fresh water followed some course which accompanied the flow of the slopes down to the ocean. Continental divides define which direction the rivers traveled, with highlands channeling the path.

The major lake region is found in the far East. There a number of smaller, but not necessarily minor, lakes are located. Their creation accompanied the uplift of the great Mountains of the East. Another area endowed with a number of lakes lies within the well-watered southern nook, in and about the plentiful jungles and rivers.

Of the rivers of Middle Earth, the Anduin ("great river" or "great flow") is the mightiest. All others should be measured by it.

The Sea: The primary consideration regarding the ocean centers on currents. Winds along the western coast of Middle Earth are westerly (come out of the West) and the currents generally counterclockwise throughout the northern hemisphere. Warm water currents prevail in the West while cool currents dominate the eastern coast.

(5.0) THE INHABITANTS OF MIDDLE EARTH

COMMENTARY

The following descriptions concern those animals and beings most adaptable to a fantasy role playing situation. Certain creatures are, by their very nature, ideal participants; others (e.g. ents) are not oriented toward FRP games.

The crucial theme that underlies all of the writings on Middle Earth is the strong connection.

Tolkien's writings, as noted above, described a world very much akin to that which we perceive around us. It is important to keep this in mind when interacting with Middle Earth. Many of the dominant figures, the flora and the fauna, are already familiar to the average person and FRP encounters should be patterned accordingly. Most of the dangers with regard to animals are with beasts which stalk present day Earth: bears, wolves, elephants, etc. Men are the most numerous of the organized societal groupings. The more fantastic creatures, such as dragons, trolls, orcs, balrogs, wraiths, wights, giant spiders, great eagles, dwarves, hobbits, elves, and ents, are present in lesser numbers and may be extremely rare or have very low "profiles."

Gandalf once described the terrible depths below Moria and noted that they are populated by creatures which defied the imagination. These caves extend under a large portion of Middle Earth, but are out of the eye of the world. The occupants are not spoken of further in the trilogy. The existence of such creatures shows that there may be beasts and beings never before described (or thought to be extinct) living in isolated areas or in regions to which Professor Tolkien paid little attention. Certainly, some survivors of Morgoth's host lived into the Third Age (and actually may have bred). The balrog and the dragons are classic examples, as are trolls and orcs. The foul and unnatural creations of Darkness come in many forms.

Since very little is known of the specific populations of the East, South, or North one must fill in tremendous gaps. Naturally, certain liberties will invariably be taken. Care must be used, however, and both consistency with the known facts and general "atmosphere" are vital. A suggested approach is included in this section under the heading of "Peculiar Problems Regarding Eastern Societies."

(5.1) GENERAL NOTES ON INHABITANTS

Balrogs: These "demons of might" are masters of terror and brute force. They should be treated as beings whose power transcends the usually accepted strength of other mythological demons; they are beyond the pale, the ultimate physical servants of darkness.

The balrog found in *The Lord of the Rings* may well have been the last of his kind. He was referred to simply as "The Balrog" in western lore and was so awesome that the presence of any brethren in other lands would hardly go unnoticed. It is possible, however, that other balrogs may have been trapped beneath the land following the fall of their master, just as the balrog of Khazad-dum had; such a circumstance might have prevented their detection. There had been, in the First Age, many balrogs, for they were the servants of Morgoth, the Dark Enemy, master of all darkness and mentor of Sauron. The cataclysm that accompanied Morgoth's departure enveloped almost all of the host.

Of all the single dark entities (save Sauron and possibly Saruman, if you consider the latter so tainted) in Middle Earth, none possessed greater physical power than these creatures. Originally, they came from the Undying Lands, just as the Istari and Sauron had, and their relative strength when compared to the inhabitants of the Middle Continent was enormous. Even dragons feared their coming. They were described in many ways by the few who lived to tell of their passing: they were both flame and shadow, huge and changing, winged and slimy, stronger than the greatest serpent's grip, bearing a red flame as a sword and a great whip with many tails. As a foe, they were called by Legolas the greatest bane of the elves, save the Lord of the Dark Tower. Gandalf (see the Istari below) struggled for some ten days with the balrog of Moria.

In a FRP context balrogs should be considered stronger than any single being which one might face. Indeed, they overshadow most small armies. Characters who happen across them should normally make a "morale check" of some kind to determine whether they flee, cower, submit, or simply go into intense shock. Should a bold or insane adventurer actually stand to face a balrog (and be able to fight), they will face a being whose weapons are many: (1) a great sheath of flame about his body which can be ignited nearly at will unless immersed in water; (2) a sword of flame in one hand and a huge whip in the other - both at least two hand weapons with respect to humanoid combatants; (3) awesome physical strength; (4) the ability to manipulate his size; (5) wings which enable him to fly unless forcibly confined or upended; (6) a shadowy body of amazing resilience which can withstand falls of literally thousands of feet into water (which would still smart); and (7) a presence embodying sheer terror.

No creature should take more concussion damage ("hits" etc.), withstand greater magic and weaponry, or absorb more temperature and elemental extremes than a balrog - except Sauron and, possibly, the Wizards (Istari) or certain dragons. Player characters, even of the greatest level, have little chance of success against such power.

Dwarves: Probably the "toughest" physically of the races, the dwarves are short (the males 4' - 5' tall, the women slightly less), stocky and ruddy of complexion, with deep-set eyes and dark wiry hair and beards (the latter they are quite proud of, and grow long, braiding them elaborately). Dwarves also are very resistant to poisons and disease, and have exceptional lifespans (to 400 years). They have superior dark sight, able to see far in caves which a human would consider pitch black, not as well as elves outdoors, but up to 50' in even the most dimly lit cavern.

They are superior craftsmen and love to mine the earth for precious gems and metals, to forge them into weapons of strength, and artifacts of beauty and power.

Not as fertile as humans, they have few children; and less than a third of their people are women, who are guarded jealously within their caverned halls.

Elves: Though basically similar to mortal men in most ways, Elves have several important, if subtle, differences. As a race, they are taller than most humans, although slender: the male height averaging between 6 feet and 6'10", yet weighing but 150-200 pounds, respectively. The women of the Elves range from 5'6" to 6'2", and are also slim. Elven men have no facial hair, and as a rule, they have less body hair than humans. Apparently highly resistant to extremes of natural heat and cold, their clothing is usually for decoration, camouflage, or, perhaps, modesty. Generally, Elves are fairer in appearance than their mortal brothers, having finer features and unmarred skin. Their senses are extremely keen, especially their hearing, and sight: they are able to see on a clear, star-or-moonlit night, as if full daylight. Their vision is correspondingly restricted with less light, down to but a few feet in what a man would call "pitch black". Perhaps most importantly: elves do not age or grow old; and their bodies are immune to all bacterial and viral infections. Thus, they are virtually immortal, (excepting violent death). They heal quickly, and show no scars (although they do not regenerate limbs).

About the kindreds of the Elves; there are the three divisions of the Eldar; and the Silvan Elves:

The "Fair Elves", highest and most lordly, migrated soon after the coming of the Valar to Valinor (The Undying lands) and dwell there still. They have hair of golden blonde, blue eyes, and fair skin; and they project a visible aura at all times. They are, as a rule, musically talented, and wear garments of white, silver and gold.

The High Elves, or Noldor, are more sturdy of build (yet still more slender than humans). The High Elves are darker: their complexions are as if tanned, and their hair is black or dark brown, with few exceptions. Their eyes can be of any colour, although brown or hazel predominates.

These Elves are the builders and craftsmen of the kindreds, most skilled in fine metalwork: weapons, armour and beautiful jewelry. Their jewelcraft is also unsurpassed. The High Elves are the most likely to live in cities, building graceful, marble-walled towns for themselves. They are also the most curious - possessed with a desire to learn all about their surroundings at any cost, which has more than once caused members of their race to fall from the path of light.

Sindar - the third and least noble of the Eldar, the Sindarin (or "Grey") Elves began the great migration with their brethren, but, after coming to Beleriand did not go over the sea into Valinor and lived in Doriath under King Thingol. At the end of the First Age, many of the Sindar sailed west, or dwelled in Lindon or Lorien, under the rule of Noldor leaders.

The Sindar greatly resemble the Silvan Elves physically, although they tend to be more muscular, and pale blue or grey eyes dominated. They also preferred clothing of an apparent neutral grey colour which has amazing camouflaging powers.

The Silvan, or "Wood-Elves," are more numerous and "rustic" than their brethren. They tend to be ruddy of complexion, with sandy hair and blue or green eyes. Not as tall as the other groups, they are still quite light of build, and very adept at moving silently, especially in the forest. They are also musically talented, although not as much so as the Fair Elves. Their clothes are usually forest green or brown, and more functional in design than the draped robes and tunics of the Fair Elves; and less elaborate than that preferred by the High Elves.

Ents: Though the oldest of all the speaking peoples, the ents were dormant until the coming of the elves, who taught them to speak, and inspired them to become mobile. They are the shepherds of the forests, resembling trees, usually one specific species (thus their overall size varies tremendously from individual to individual). Though tremendously wise, they are not quick thinkers and are slow to take any rash action. They are basically gentle by nature, but when angered can be tremendously fearsome - even as the roots of trees can smash rocks over time, so can ents, in but seconds. They are also almost impossible to kill, except by intense fire.

They are a dwindling race, partially because in later years many have developed the tendency to revert to their dormant, "treelike" form; and also to the disappearance of the ent wives, who, over a span of many years, became sundered from their mates and have vanished from the pages of history.

Hobbits: Smallest of the speaking people, hobbits average between 3 and 4 feet in height, and tend to be fat. They have large feet, very hairy - to the point of being "furry", which are almost immune to cold, and so they go about almost always barefoot. They are an innoffensive people, preferring the quiet of their own villages. Lovers of good food and drink, they spend much of their time at inns and friend's houses, eating. They are able to move very quietly, and have a high level of manual dexterity. Hobbits also are possessed of an amazing constitution, and can resist even the most powerful magical and physical damage for extended periods.

Humans Of mortal men there are basically two kindreds: the "high men" (Edain, Dunedain, and Numenoreans) of the west; and the more rustic common men.

The high men tend to be even taller than Elves 6' - 7' tall), but heavier-boned and physically stronger, although perhaps less nimble than the elven-kind. Their hair is dark-brown or coal-black, eyes blue, grey or black, and they tend to be fair-skinned, from very pale seeming to a ruddy but still light complexion. The lifespan of the high mortals is quite long, up to 250 - 300 years in those of pure descent. They are great warriors and builders of empires, for their initiative matches their physical stature.

The common men are shorter (5'6" - 6'4" men; 5' - 5'10" women) and stockier of build as a rule, and their hair and eyes run the entire spectrum of normal shades, (although the coal black hair like that of the high men is rare). They are less lordly in appearance than the high men, and the males often wear beards or mustaches, as opposed to their brethren of the west, who are most often clean-shaven.

Orcs: Bred by Morgoth long ago, orcs are said to be originally made from the tortured, mangled elves he had captured and perverted long ago, as the "Dark Enemy" could not create life himself.

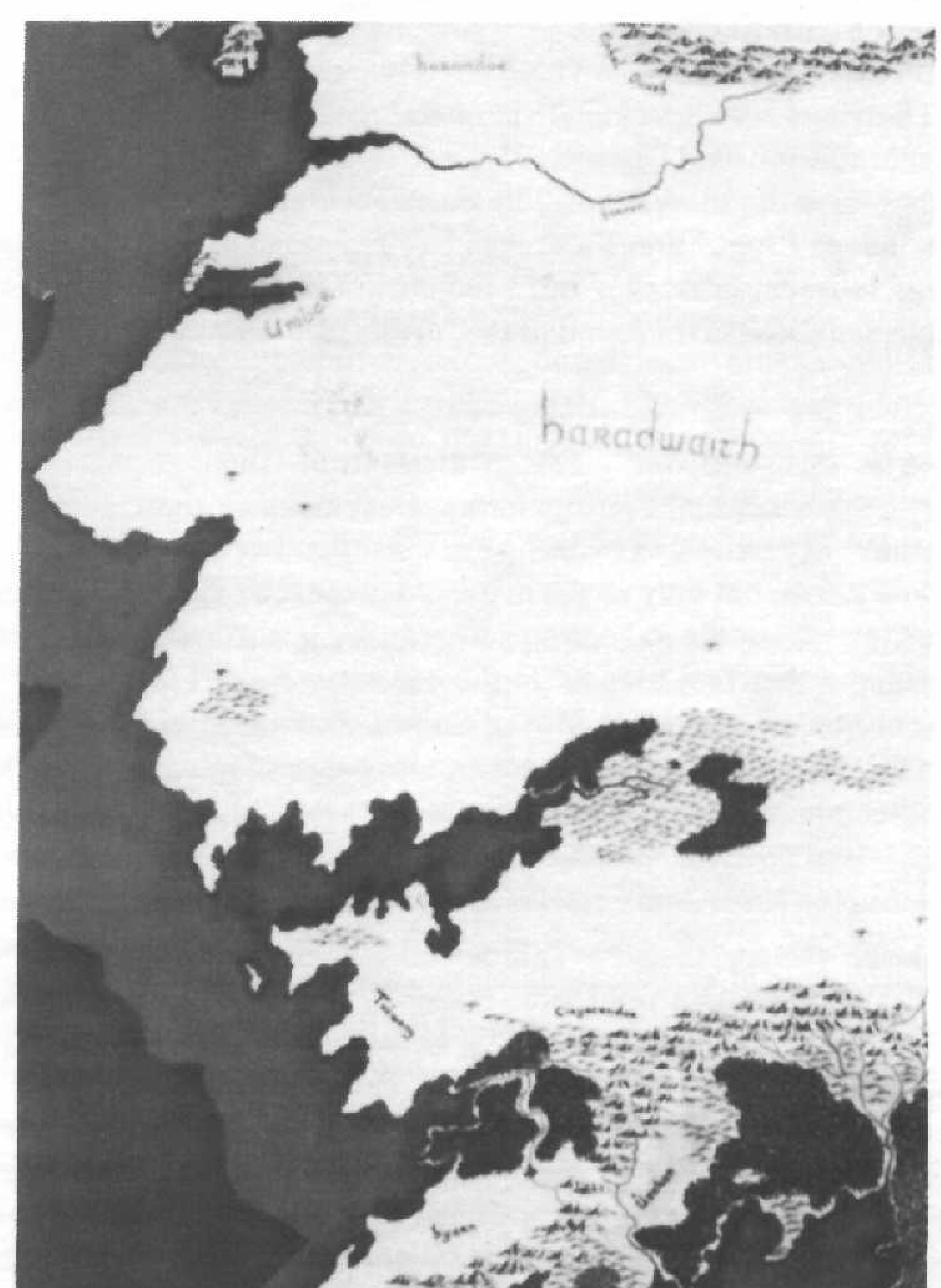
Whether or not this is true, there is certainly no resemblance between the elves and the goblin-like slaves of darkness.

Generally, orcs grow to be about 6' tall, with thick hides and grotesque, fanged faces. They are very heavy of build: bred as warriors and laborers. With few exceptions, they cannot stand daylight, and are blinded by the unshielded sun. Only at night can they see well (with sight as the elves). They are without exception cannibalistic, bloodthirsty and cruel, wielding curved scimitars and wicked axes.

One group of orcs is worthy of special mention: the Uruk-Hai. Bred by Saruman for his citadel at Orthanc, they are much more human-like in appearance, and can withstand sunlight, if necessary.

Trolls: Bred by Morgoth, in mockery of ents, even as the orcs were of elves, trolls are as strong as the stone of which they are made. They are huge and immensely strong, (usually about 10' tall) but stupid and slow-moving, hating all other living creatures. Trolls are divided into several types, (based on their location): hill, cave, snow, and stone trolls, the last being the most common. Trolls cannot stand the light of day, in fact reverting to the stone of their substance in sunlight.

A special breed, developed by Sauron, called the Olog-hai, are able to survive daylight while the Dark Lord's will is bent upon them, and in addition are unusually agile and intelligent, and many believed them to be giant orcs.



(6.0) LANGUAGE AND CULTURE IN MIDDLE EARTH

COMMENTARY

As Tolkien himself often noted, both *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* began as component parts of a rich, necessary background for a much vaster history of Elvish tongues. His systematic attempt to portray a society in Middle Earth gave us the flavor of languages embraced by the people, coupled with a rich cultural tradition, and gave the reader a vivid picture of the lands and peoples Tolkien was attempting to describe. These elements are also important tools for the good GM. A gamemaster should get an understanding of the underlying linguistic patterns in Middle Earth (e.g. Elvish tongues giving birth to certain mannish languages), form consistent groupings of related forms of speech, determine what groups speak what, etc. until a framework exists. This will enable the GM to better sketch his societies. The following is a helpful, albeit brief, guide to the important patterns of language in Middle Earth. Note the handy chart below.

(6.1) LANGUAGE IN THE WEST

In the late Third Age there are two primary language groups upon which the "mannish" tongues found west of the Redwater (Carnen) and north of the Poros River are based - Sindarin and Westron. In turn, these groups are themselves indirectly related.

(6.11) Elvish Tongues

Elvish is the mother tongue for a number of mannish languages and certainly influenced many more. In the West, its vocabulary and associated lore have constantly touched the cultures of most of the inhabitants, particularly men and hobbits. Yet, Elvish is itself split into at least three major linguistic subgroups.

Prior to the Great Journey of the elves across Middle Earth there was one ancient Elvish tongue. This situation changed, however, as the First-born began to go separate ways. The elven group that crossed the sea and reached the Undying Lands developed a language that is, perhaps, closest to the elder speech; this is called Quenya. Those that undertook the Great Journey but did not leave the shores of Middle Earth eventually gave the world Sindarin. The "Silvan Elves," non-Eldar who had remained behind at the time of the Great Journey, created a third linguistic branch which may include the tongues of those elves found in the forests of the East.

Quenya: ("High Elvish") This is a beautiful language marked by fluid, joyous tones and patterns. Developed in the Undying Lands, it may have been affected by the great Valar themselves. Quenya is spoken in Middle Earth, but only rarely in everyday speech. The ents and the Noldor exiles (elves) are the only groups who utilize it in normal conversation. It is considered the "first tongue" in the coastal areas of Lindon near the Grey Havens and among the Noldor of Lorien. Both groups are small and quite elusive. Other elven groups use it as a language of lore, lending it an almost spiritual quality. Access to Quenya is quite limited.

Sindarin: ("Grey Elvish") This is the language of the Sindar who also developed the Cirth ("runes"). Sindarin is probably farther removed from the original Elvish by virtue of the Sindar's long exposure to Middle Earth and men. Sindarin has had a heavy influence on mannish speech, particularly that of northern groups, and their heirs, notably the Dunedain. It is spoken by most Eldar (non-Silvan elves) as a first or second tongue (the Noldor of Lindon and Lorien still favor Quenya), and is known to much of the aristocracy/royalty in Gondor. Westron uses a number of Sindarin words directly or via Adunaic influence, and Sindarin lore is prevalent in much of the cultures associated with Westron. It is the most accessible elven language.

Silvan Tongues: The extent of Silvan dialects is unclear. They certainly are predominant among the elves of northern Rhovanian (specifically in Mirkwood) and were carried by Silvan Elves into the forests and mountains where they settled. Since the Silvan groups outnumber the Eldar, there are majority Silvan populations in areas such as Lorien and the Woodland Realm where the Eldar rule, and the "Wood-Elf" tongue is common even in regions traditionally associated with the Sindar. Silvan Elves are also called "East-Elves" or "Wood-Elves" and may speak a language that is similar to (or virtually the same) as the speech of the elves of the East. This may account for the ambiguous "East-Elves" label, although such a name may simply mean the elves of eastern northwest Middle Earth. Of the three branches of Elvish, this is the least "noble;" nonetheless, it is a beautiful language, especially when properly spoken. Silvan speech is relatively accessible.

Elvish Writing and Notes on Speech: Two writing patterns are dominant in areas of the West where Elvish or Westron based languages hold sway. The older of the two, the TENGWAR ("letters"), was developed by the Eldar in the Undying Lands and was originally associated with Quenya. It has thirty-six symbols (traditionally) and they have been used to represent a variety of writing constructs depending upon the folk that employed the system. It was originally a phonetic structure with symbols corresponding to consonants. Some elven and mannish groups have injected vowels, while others have used diacritic marks to achieve necessary vowel sounds. The TENGWAR are ideal for brush or pen writing, but lack the advantages of the CIRTH when it comes to runes - inscriptions. TENGWAR usage corresponds to the boundaries of Westron.

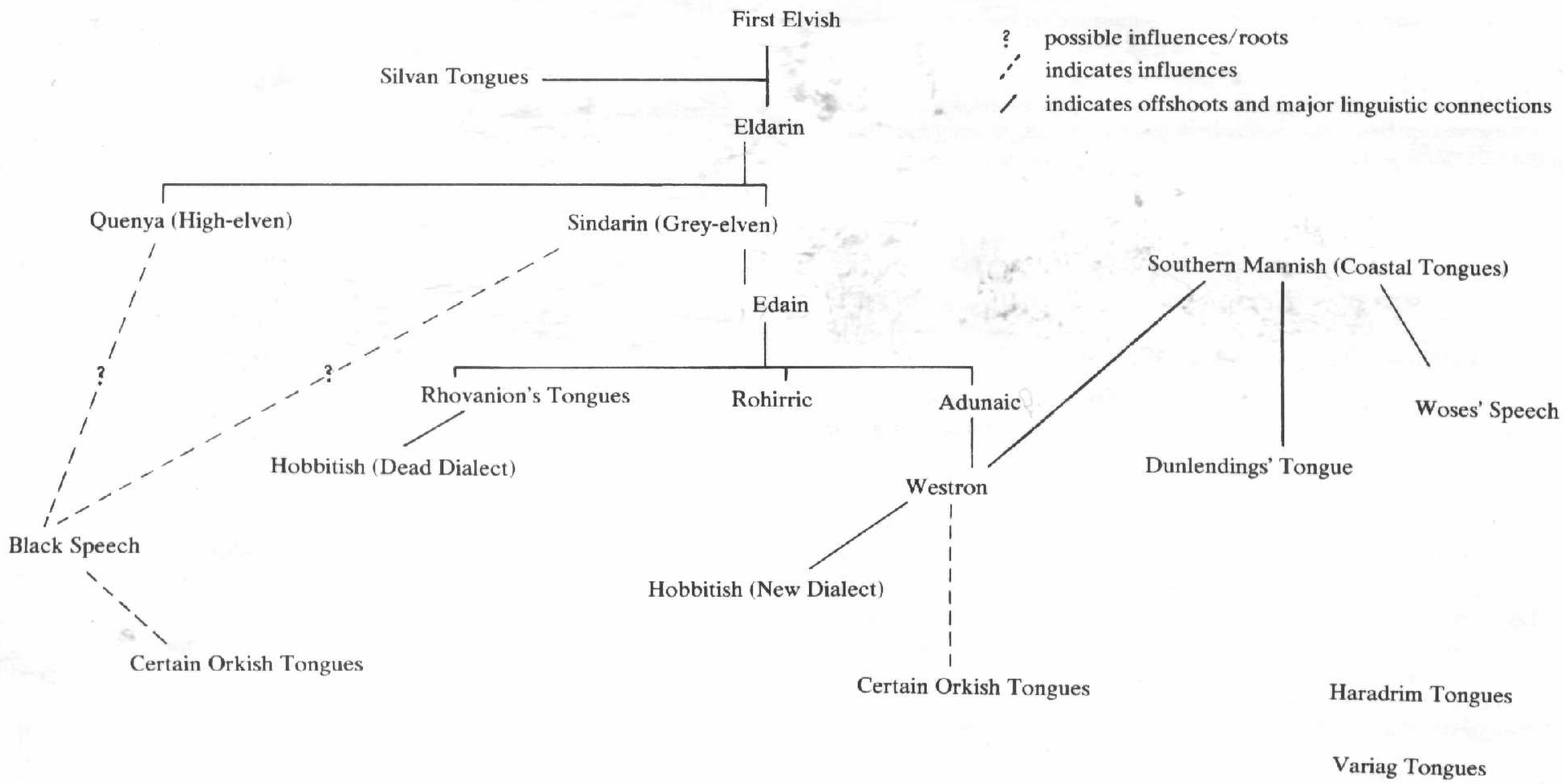
The CIRTH ("Certar" or "runes") was developed by the Sindar and is a much more angular approach to representation. Its symbols are ideal for runes. Like the TENGWAR, the CIRTH has spread throughout Middle Earth in various forms. One, the Angerthas Moria ("Long Runes of Moria"), is the script employed by the Dwarves for representations of their own Khuzdul. Mannish groups have their own forms or form based on the Sindar's.

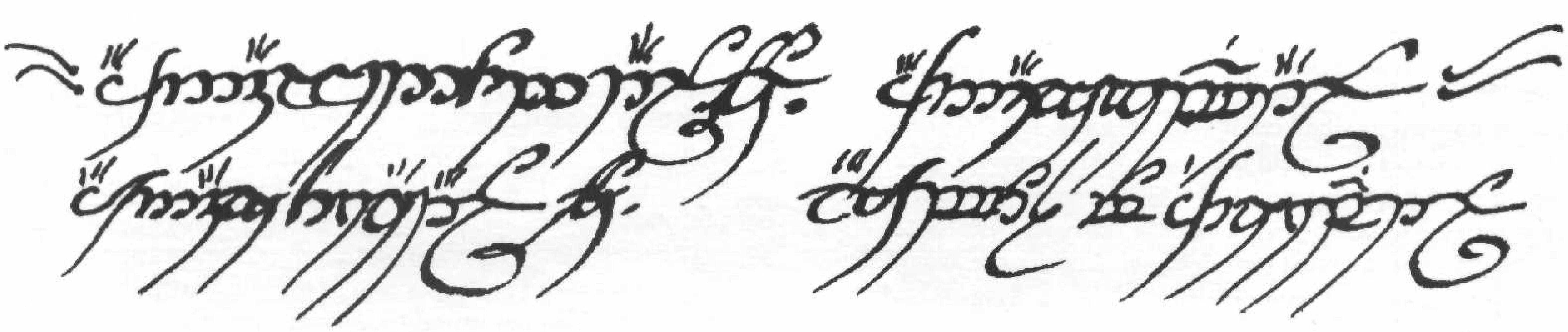
Those acquainted with a particular form of writing associated with the TENGWAR or CIRTH will not necessarily understand the nuances of script employed by other languages using these forms. Both writing forms vary heavily, for they are modified according to the tongue they represent. A GM should be careful not to allow a character too much freedom reading writings based on either script if he/she is attempting to decipher a language that is in whole or part unfamiliar.

(6.12) Northern Mannish Languages

The language of the men of the West can be divided into two major categories - (1) the northern speech which was influenced heavily by elven tongues; and (2) southern linguistic groups, of which only a few seem to have common roots. A great deal of uncertainty clouds the past of the southern branch, and it is quite possible that no common ancestor of all of these languages existed; certainly the connection to the speech of the Haradrim (Southrons) is tenuous.

Westron: Also called "common speech," Westron was spoken by every mannish group in the West - with the exception of the Woses, Dunlendings, and Rohirrim (Men of Rohan). Dwarves use Westron while "in public." Where a number of different races meet in council or to discuss affairs Westron is employed as a common ground. Westron is actually a mixture of Adunaic and specific southern languages, but is more properly a northern dialect because of the dominance of Adunaic and strong Elvish influences. Adunaic provides most of the vocabulary; southern coastal dialects were in part incorporated following the arrival of the Dunedain from Numenor.





Adunaic: This was the language of the Dunedain of Numenor and is descended from the Edain tongue (with intervening Sindarin influences). It is the parent language of Westron and is still spoken among the noble classes of Gondor - but only very rarely. It is, for all intents and purposes, extremely uncommon and inaccessible, although it is by no means "dead." It is related to the speech found among men in the Vales of the Anduin.

Rohirric: The men of Rohan speak a distinct tongue distantly related to the language of the Edain (which spawned Adunaic). Both groups are derived from a common source. As such, Rohirric is a Northmen form that is vaguely akin to older language found in Rhovanion. The men of Rhovanion (Mirkwood and the surrounding environs), however, speak Westron for the most part; any distinct older dialects have been incorporated, abandoned, or displaced in common use. Rohirric is a relatively unchanged tongue, for the Rohirrim have a very conservative culture, and theirs is a language that closely follows the patterns of their ancient predecessors.

Hobbitish: Hobbitish is a peculiar dialect of Westron, at least the Hobbitish used in the late Third Age. There is no record of a distinct hobbit (Kuduk) language, and hobbits have apparently always relied on nearby mannish tongues. The early hobbit speech of their pre and early Shire years was actually a dialect akin to Rohirric, a branch of the Northmen's language. This was abandoned, however, for the years in the Shire saw a gradual adoption (and modification) of Westron.

(6.13) **Southern Mannish Languages**

The patterns and relationships of southern tongues are hazy. At least two related groupings are apparent, but their connection to other mannish forms is unknown; they are probably a distinct family called here "southern." Note that this grouping does not include the languages of the "Southrons," referred to here by the Elvish "Haradrim". The latter peoples populated the Great Desert and regions south and immediately east not including Khand, which is the land of the Variags.

Southmen Speech: This grouping of tongues includes both the tongues of the Dunlendings and the men of Bree. The speech found in the values of the White Mountains (Ered Nimrais) in elder days was of this kind, and isolated pockets of these folk still can be found in the highlands. The language of men of Bree was an early offshoot of the same Southmen line, but has since been superceded by Westron in Bree proper and the nearby land (i.e. they now speak Westron in Bree). The speech of the Dunlendings is found wherever they abound, notably in Dunland. Lesser dialects may be scattered throughout the region of the southern Misty Mountains and western White Mountains. Like all southern mannish languages, they bear no resemblance to the speech of the Northmen or heirs of the Edain (Rohirric or the Westron speakers).

Wild Men's Speech: The "Wild Men" of the West are actually known as Woses and differ heavily in build and character from the Dunlendings. The language of the Woses is also different, but seems to have come from a common ancestor (which also spawned related coastal tongues seen in Gondor before the coming of the Dunedain). This tongue is found in the Druadan Forest (which lies along the northern edge of the White Mountains west and slightly north of Minis Tirith). Related dialects are present in Andrast, the peninsula of western Gondor.

(6.14) Khuzdul ("Dwarvish")

Of all the languages of Middle Earth, Khuzdul is probably the most inaccessible. Few non-Dwarves ever heard it spoken; fewer still ever learned it. Among the Dwarves (Khazad) it was the language of lore and intra-dwarven everyday speech, but they were careful to use Westron when conversing among men or elves. The writings in Khuzdul were made using a variant of the CIRTH, Angerthas Moria.

(6.15) Other Tongues of the West

Most of the other languages found in the West were in some way affected by those above. Nonetheless, these groups are distinct and are not part of any linguistic family so far discussed.

(6.151) Entish

Ents have their own home tongue which was born in times before history. This speech is akin to other aspects of ent culture. It is spoken extremely slowly and is unique to a degree as to be unintelligible as far as normal men, elves, dwarves, etc. are concerned. In rare inter-racial conversations, or even among themselves, ents most often speak Quenya, a language taught them by the Noldor. They know other tongues but rarely use them.

(6.152) Black Speech

Sauron of Mordor invented Black Speech in the Second Age, and may have used certain elven constructs when composing its form. His fall at the end of the age corresponded to a decline in the usage of his language. It remains a tongue rarely used in its purer form. Only the higher servants of the Dark Lord employ it on an everyday basis. Dialects, however, are rather common, although they are for the most part debased. Certain orc groups speak variations of Black Speech or combinations of Black Speech and Westron. The terrible Olog-hai (Sauron's elite "troll people") use it in a relatively proper manner.

(6.153) Orkish (Orcish)

Orkish is not one language or even a language family; rather it is a number of tribal tonues whose common bond is the large shared vocabulary made up of curses. No grammatical structure for Orkish has ever been devised. Instead, orcs speak dialects based on either Westron or Black Speech or both. Some tribes may use a Southron based form. As a result of this diversity, communication between orc tribes is exceedingly difficult, although some enlightened orcs have been known to employ an intelligible form of Westron.

(6.154) The Languages of Harad

The extent of the penetration of Westron into the region known as Harad is unknown. There is little doubt that it is spoken among men of commerce and political persuasion even in the deep desert. This is due in part to the great trade routes. The Haradrim, however, apparently rely on a linguistic heritage that is separate from their northern brethren. Thus, in isolated or non-cosmopolitan areas, and among the unlearned, Westron will be of little use. Certain words will be recognizable, but understanding will be hard (connections in vocabulary are due to Numenorean penetrations in the Second and Third Ages).

The Variags of Khand are a distinct grouping and maintain their own culture and tongue. This is also true of the peoples who occupy regions located across the mountain ranges that border the desert.

(6.155) The Language of the Forodwaith ("Snowmen")

The inhabitants of the area known as the "Northern Waste" in the Third Age are known as the Lossoth; they are commonly referred to as the Forodwaith. Their language has connections with no other, for they were never given the gift of language in the way their neighbors the Edain and Northmen were. As a result their tongue is unique, and reflects the poor, harsh lifestyle to which they ascribe. It should be noted that their location results in certain concepts (such as "desert") being alien to them, while they may have a thousand different words for snow and ice.

(6.2) LANGUAGE IN THE WILD LANDS - EAST, SOUTH, AND NORTH

For the areas outside the West we will be less specific. General guidelines are more appropriate when speaking of the East, South, or North. After all, detail is lacking and creative interpretation is at a premium when attempting to discern specific linguistic or cultural patterns.

There are no distinct dividing lines when it comes to language and culture on a continental land mass. Neighboring groups invariably interact, borrow, and integrate to some degree. It is, therefore, important to realize that the descriptions of languages found in the West are applicable in part wherever those groups are found, and their influence can be felt in border areas. An example of this is the language of Westron, which influences groups, and is spoken by those learned, in areas well to the east of the Sea of Rhun or south of the River Poros. Silvan Elvish's impact is also widespread outside the West; in fact, it is (in some form) spoken on the eastern coast of the continent.

The underlying characteristic of all regions outside the West is diversity. Unlike the northwestern section of Middle Earth, these areas are relatively disorganized and/or primitive, having only minor impact on continental affairs. The reasons for this are many, but two spring immediately to mind: (1) the elven influence was limited due to the departure of many on the Great Journey and subsequent fragmentation of remaining groups; and (2) a lack of a dominant mannish group such as the Edain which was capable of unifying vast areas culturally and/or politically, thereby mobilizing a powerful world force. The absence of these crucial elements centered around geography; only the West was "near" the Undying Lands and was able to concentrate large numbers or organized elven groups at a time when men were common. The combination of intense Elvish culture and masses of men led to cultural transfer in the First and Second Ages - resulting in a forceful Edain culture which later spawned the kingdoms of Numenor and of the exiles (Arnor and Gondor). Thus, while the West saw the creation of unifying, widespread cultural constructs, such as Westron ("common speech") and the CIRTH and the TENGWAR, the East and South were left with fragmented groups embracing a multitude of lesser tongues and scripts. There was certainly elven influence outside the West, for many Silvan Elves occupied the Eastern forests, but their presence was less pervasive. The great captains of Numenor and her colonies founded towns and citadels along Middle Earth's eastern and southern coasts, but no vast kingdoms were established.

A third outside influence from the West that has affected eastern and southern societies is that of Sauron of Mordor. During the years S.A. 1800-3262, 3320-41 and through the Third Age Sauron's forces have affected these regions in varying degrees. The Dark Lord has subjugated some, exacted tribute and aid from others, and driven whole peoples from their land. The wanderings of some of these displaced groups (e.g. the so-called Balchoth and Wainriders) have resulted in wars with western nations. The coming of Darkness has no doubt had significant impact on language and culture in these regions, and may have led to a bit of unification (although masters often prefer their subjects to be splintered).

(6.21) **Guidelines for Languages in the East and South**

The East and South are subject to numerous shifts in population, and it is important to realize that the cultural mosaic is ever changing. When attempting to construct cultures and language groups in these territories the following guidelines should prove helpful:

(1) Societies are generally isolated cultural constructs with primitive political and technological organization and have few unifying elements (e.g. no great "common speech"). This is less true in the more organized areas where the influences of the Elves, Sauron, or Dunedain colonists are significant;

(2) Communication and travel are more difficult; roads and trade routes are generally less developed and large urban areas are much rarer;

(3) Language and writing have more variations, and literacy rates are lower;

(4) Wars are more frequent but smaller; armies are many; and often large, but are less sophisticated in combat; and

(5) Trade routes, although fewer and less comfortable, dominate international affairs; commerce is the inter-societal language; and

(6) Individual political figures affect smaller regions.

(6.22) **Guidelines for Languages in the North**

In the North live the Forodwaith, the Lossoth. Their language and culture, as noted earlier, is unique and bears little resemblance to other groups nearby. They are relatively poor, live in isolated familial or clan groupings, and are widely scattered. The level of their technology is quite low. Other northern peoples possibly related to or identified by others as the Lossoth, occupy other areas to the East. Keep in mind, however, that the North is a land of intense cold; indeed, the far North is known as the "region of everlasting cold."

Cultural groups found in the North may have southern brethren, just as they do in our society. Nonetheless, these "related" cultural units will differ widely. They do not share subsistence techniques, neighbors, or geographical influences; and necessarily rely on different cultural standards and patterns.

(7.0) THE USE OF POWER IN MIDDLE EARTH

COMMENTARY

Professor Tolkien's histories were intended as a backdrop for a great work on Elvish languages and centered on that part of the world where the elven tongues saw their most extensive development. The West, close to the Undying Lands and a channel and repository for elves journeying across the sea, was the area of greatest concentration for the First-born in Middle Earth. It was in this limited quarter that Sindarin was developed and Quenya given to the mortal world. Both the TENGWAR and CIRTH appeared first in the West. Thus, it was only natural to focus discussions of political and military affairs on this region. In addition, due to their proximity to the highly developed elves, men in the northwestern section of Middle Earth became quite advanced. Compared to their brethren in other parts of the world, the Edain and Northmen were technologically superior, generally more literate, and politically organized. The history of the West, then, was the history of those groups who were capable of dominating the entire continent. Discourse concerning events elsewhere was of highly limited value.

The West's unique ties to the Undying Lands also created a potential for the appearance and use of significant power. Such power manifested itself on a massive scale in the First Age, and to a lesser, but significant degree in the Second Age. By the time of the late Third Age it was quite subtle - except in the cases of dragons, the balrog, Saruman, and (of course) Sauron. This low-key approach to the utilization of great power was a factor relating to the nature of those possessing the gift. The Valar laid down their direct guardianship of Middle Earth in stages, at the end of the First Age and with the downfall of Numenor. They still kept watch and intervened in the Third Age by sending the Istari (Wizards), beings who themselves had great power. The Istari, like their masters, did not use force unless it was absolutely necessary to combat Darkness, and then only to the degree needed - no more. As a result of this approach, they appeared far weaker than they really were.

The other masters of magic employed their abilities in relative secret. Western men and hobbits were not great friends of spells and often were unaware of their usage outside of fairy tales and legends. This created an atmosphere where magical occurences were rarely seen and often became merged or confused with natural events. Again, the use of power was quite subtle. Tolkien's constant use of nature to illustrate this strength follows this pattern and makes the world he wrote about all the more believeable.



(7.1) POWER IN THE WEST VERSUS POWER ELSEWHERE IN MIDDLE EARTH

As noted above, the West is an area which has a history of great power and history-making events,

As noted above, the West is somewhat unique. Its history and occupants tend to be dominant, and the watchful eyes of the Valar seem to focus upon the events there. The use of power in the region is naturally colored by these factors. Another vital aspect, however, is the presence of Sauron in Mordor. Sauron is not one to restrain himself when he deems it necessary to act with great authority. He does act cautiously and quietly, especially when nursing himself after a great defeat, but he is capable of unbridled explosions. Those who live under his eye are particularly careful not to cause attention to be brought upon themselves, and this feeling may contribute to the restraint found in the Elves and Dwarves who possess the ability to wield spells. Some are weary or concerned about upsetting the balance of things, to be sure, but others are doubtlessly afraid. Still others died at the hands of Sauron or others of power; for the bold, those with power, often dare to combat those most dangerous.

In the East and South this restraint is not necessarily evident. To begin with, the region is itself relatively wild and there is a different "balance" in order. Elves in the East tend to wander and embrace the values of old - ways common before the Valar and their light affected their kind. Silvan elves seem to have a much more self-centered picture of the world and their cares differ. As a result, their primary reasons for withholding the utilization of spells have to do with avoiding contact with unfamiliar, unfriendly, or undesirable peoples.

(7.2) POWER AND FRP SETTINGS

This dichotomy in the use of power in Middle Earth affects one's portrayal of its lands and peoples. When constructing a society in the West, a GM must take great care to show restraint regarding the use of magic. Magic-users are relatively rare, although most folk had some "magic" in them, and open displays of power are still rarer. Elves certainly employ magic in daily life, and dwarves use spells for a variety of reasons, even for producing wondrous toys; nonetheless, such enchanting skills are not necessarily the norm. Among hobbits magic is considered the stuff of legends. Men most often feel the same way; indeed some have never heard of its use.

In the East or South, however, a depiction of society may often include more common occurrences of spell use. Depending on the peoples, and their exposure to the Elves, Dunedain, or concepts condusive to magic-users and masters of various forms of power, the casting of spells might be quite apparent. The overall political impact of the society may not be great, but this does not preclude the use of magic. What holds these peoples back, and has defeated any eastern or southern "empire" from rising, is a lack of organization. Where there has been unity, it has been modest or Sauron has held sway. Always remember that the West is unique in this, and many other, respects. Power in the East and South manifests itself differently.

(8.0) INTEGRATING MIDDLE EARTH INTO A FANTASY ROLE PLAYING CAMPAIGN

COMMENTARY

The nature of FRP lends itself to creativity. The players and the gamemaster both participate in a "living novel" within which each individual envisions and creates his own setting. So too, J.R.R. Tolkien's Middle Earth is both his fantasy and ours; it is a reflection of our world as we perceive it, as well as a construction of mythology by a great and learned man. Middle Earth is itself undying, living in the minds of all who tread its paths. Each reader adds to it his or her own vision. It is only natural, then, to use this incredible foundation in a fantasy role playing context. In this way those close to Middle Earth can experience it in a new way, filling the gaps and discovering the mysteries that have always concerned them.

(8.1) ADAPTABILITY AND FRP SYSTEMS

Certain FRP systems are more flexible than others and it is important to note that basic changes may be necessary if one wants a setting consistent with the flavor of Middle Earth. As noted above, the world is itself flexible, especially in the areas outside the West. Nonetheless, a FRP system based on rigid rules drawn from medieval Botswanan mythology might need modification. It is important to ascertain where these rule changes must be made and how the alterations will affect the system's flow and any underlying philosophy. Play balance can be destroyed by careless remolding. Most FRP systems will have no problem being fitted into a game set in Middle Earth. After all, Tolkien's world contributed heavily to, and may have been the guiding force behind, most FRP rules and associated ideas.

(8.2) A SUGGESTED APPROACH FOR INTEGRATION

The following hints may be helpful when constructing a Middle Earth campaign:

(1) *Determine the scale of the game* — the number of players, the size of the area within which you want to run, the level of power found in the campaign;

(2) *Use the map and sources to pick an area that fits your designs and desires.* If you want immense detail and slightly lessened flexibility choose an area located in the well-documented West. If you want tremendous creative leeway, find a spot elsewhere. Note that there may be an available module covering the area or one nearby, and this can be a handy base from which to start work. When choosing the overall setting look to the local cultures, politics, geography, economic and military systems, etc. Great drama can be achieved with the proper choice of locale. Also decide whether you wish to spend a lot of time below ground or in varying places;

(3) *Look to the period in history in which you wish to run.* Certain periods plagued by great war may allow for tremendous uncertainty and action. Some eras are better documented, but may be less flexible. Epic quests deciding the fate of the world best be run in the Fourth Age, otherwise certain events may be preordained. Naturally, you may wish to change situations and you may be able to account for differing occurences. Remember that the Fourth Age is the "time of men" and many elves have departed; both the hobbits and dwarves avoid mankind by hiding and the world is generally less rich with regard to these folk. If a module provides a setting but you want to run in a different era, make the appropriate modifications by using the sources;

(4) *Assemble your source materials;*

(5) *Create a total setting.* Provide reasons for events and why the world is as it is. Develop patterns of subsistence, migration, weather, etc. to account for preordained or "random" events. Construct cultures consistent with the land upon which they live. If a group isn't originally from the region note why, and what effects the area had on their old ways. Take care to fit religious, political, and military constructs into the world (an unusually powerful realm which conquered vast territories and is capable of taking Mordor must be explained);

(6) *Use lots of maps to detail patterns and provide a creative framework.* With a generalized map you can create a specific picture off the top of your head (making notations for future reference) and remain consistent;

(7) *Take your rules system and note what it has to say about the cultures and peoples upon which it is based.* Make the necessary changes to conform it to Middle Earth (e.g. dragons and balrogs may be too common and too weak under your rules). See if this affects play balance. If it does, make corrections to compensate.

Remember that a good world is more important than a technical rule. One can make rules modifications without too much pain. The setting is much more vital, and a world invariably determines its own physical laws.



(9.0) OF MAPS AND MODULES AND THEIR USE

COMMENTARY

The following section is devoted to explaining the use of the accompanying poster map and giving the reader a guide to the use and integration of the various modules based on Middle Earth. Each module will detail a specific section of land covering an area between 37,400 (170 x 220) and 149,600 (340 x 440) square miles. The maps found in these packages can be referenced to the grid sections on the folded version of the poster map and are scaled in such a way that they will fit together with others showing adjacent territories — forming a vast mosaic of the entire continent (eventually). Specific instructions for combining these products are discussed in the modules proper.

(9.1) ILLUSTRATIVE MAPS

Below are series of maps which illustrate important aspects of the continent. Numbers on the pictures correspond to the notes below. These maps provide the GM with accessible details concerning the social and political aspects of Middle Earth, as well as some notes on weather.



(9.11) Major Towns of the West (Some Ruined)

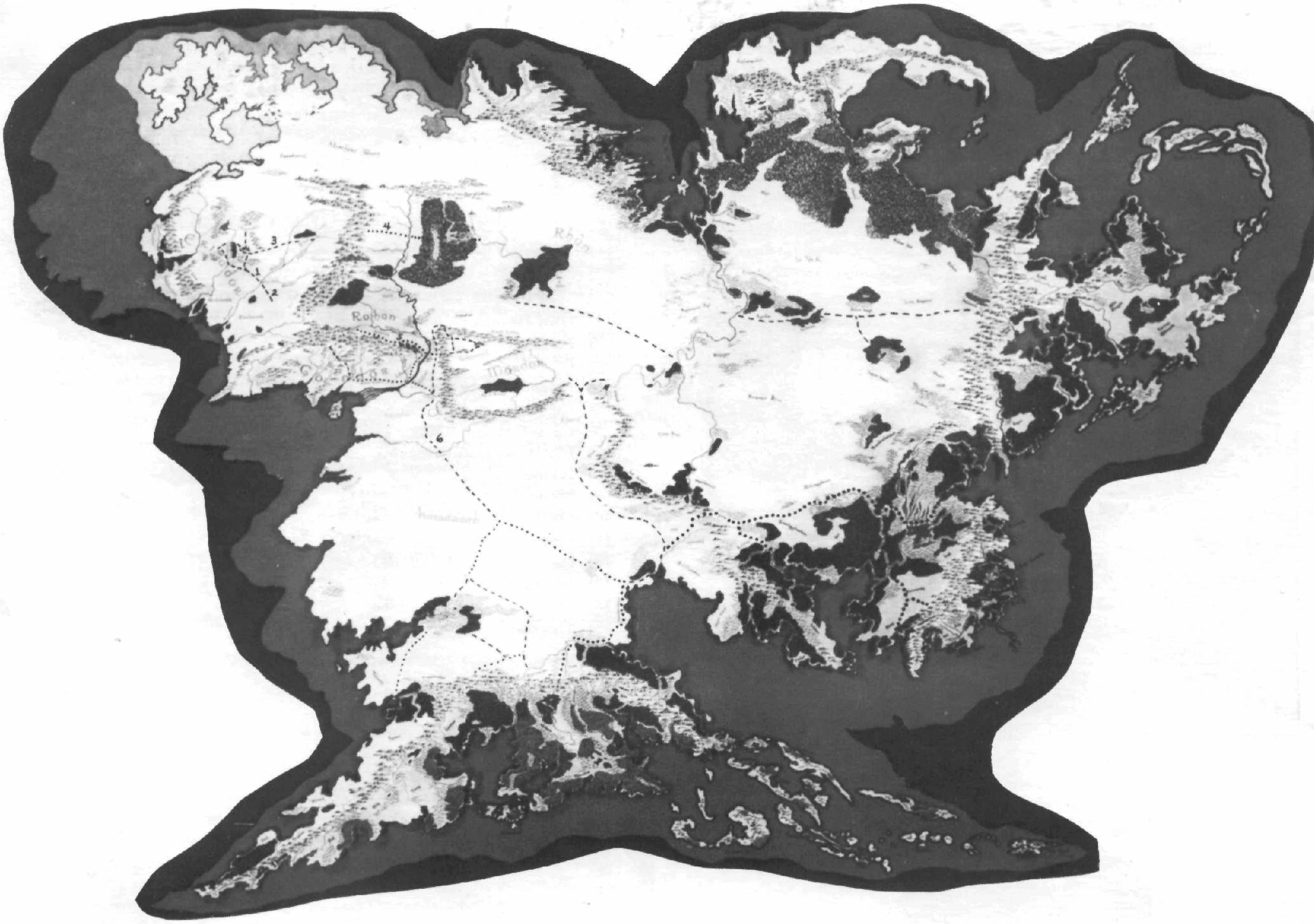
1) Grey Havens
2) Fornost
3) Bree
4) Rivendell (Imladris)
5) Esgaroth Upon the Long Lake
6) Caras Galadon (City of Trees)
7) Moria (Khazad-Dum)
8) Edoras
9) Minas Tirith
10) Osgiliath
11) Pelargir
12) Linhir
13) Dol Amroth
14) City of the Corsairs (Umbar)
15) Tharbad



(9.12) Major Citadels of the West (Some Ruined)

1) Carn Dum
2) Mount Gundabad
3) Amon Sul (Weathertop)
4) Dol Guldur
5) Orthanc (Isengard)
6) Helms Deep
7) Minas Morgul (Once Minas Ithil)
8) Barad-Dur





(9.13) **Trade Routes and Roads**

1) Greenway (North Road)
2) Old South Road (North Road below Tharbad)
3) East Road
4) Old Forest Road
5) Great West Road
6) The Harad Road

(9.14) **Languages of the West**

1) Elvish
   a) Quenya
   b) Sindarin
   c) Silvan Tongues
2) Khuzdul
3) Northern Mannish
   d) Westron
   e) Rohirric
4) Southern Mannish
   f) Dunlending Tongues
   g) Wild Men Tongues (Woses)
5) Entish
6) Black Speech
7) Various Orkish Dialects





(9.15) **Climate**

1) Arid
2) Semi-arid
3) Hot and Humid
4) Temperate (Mild)
5) Temperate (Cool)
6) Cold
7) Severe Cold
8) Everlasting Cold

(9.2) NOTES ON USE OF CONTINENTAL MAP

The full-color map of Middle Earth has been designed to give the viewer the "flavor" of the land. The shading in green indicates temperate or fertile areas with adequate or more than sufficient water supply. Deeper greens represent territory with substantial water; lighter greens show regions with seasonal rainfall and/or runoff. Yellow greens cover areas which are semi-arid. Naturally, the desert is shaded in sand. White locations are those of severe or everlasting cold. Be careful to distinguish them from swamps, for the latter have their own symbol.

When using the large map a GM may wish to have a mobile mileage scale. In this way travels can be easily measured regardless of direction. Simply trace or copy the scale shown on the map surface and construct one or more handy copies for use in the game.

(10.0) SELECTED READING

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Lettering Key
Defined Areas
Wild/Tribal Areas
(Lost Realms)
Water
Mountains
Lōchas Drūs
Anch
Kinakh
Vulm Shayak
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32




Umbar
harondor
Gondor
Rohan
Anfalas
Enedwaith
Gwathlo
Isen
Lefnui
Ringlo
Nimrais
Gilrain
Lebennin
Sirith
S. Ithilien



Rohan
Anórien
Entwash
Dagorlad
Ered Lithui
Ithilien
Gorgoroth
Mordor
Lebennin
Sirith
Gilrain
Ethir Anduin
S. Ithilien
Nurn
Sea of Nurnen
Poros
harondor
Ephel Duath
harnen
Khand
Umbar
haradwaith
Kykurian Kyn
Rycolis
Daldenais
Talathrant
Dalpygis
Relmether
Núrad
Kargagis Ahar
Chey Sart
Ered harmal
Onyothraath
Alduryaknar
Clyan
Vasg
Chy
Gaathgykarkan
Lôdenúlý
Acaana
Bulchyades
harshandatt
Olyas Kris
Kirmlesra



Üster Kryl
Lygan Kraw
Ubarn
Jendiar
Kasn Ond
Buskadekdar
Raljan
Aldurayaknar
Ilbav
Ruarnk
Ārn-Simonig
Unvranay
Ka'ish
Shay
Lōchas Drūs
Thārae Codya
Curvac Wōmaw
Wōm Shayac
Lettering Key



Forlindon
Harlindon
Ered Luin
Lhûn
ERIADOR
(Arnor)
Baranduin
Minhiriath
Mitheithel
Glanduin
Dunland
Rhudaur
Bruinen
Eregion
(Angmar)
Forodwaith
Northern Waste
Rohan
Wold
Anduin
Rhovanion
Ered Mithrin


Avikangsdan
Und
Baal Syanac
thern Waste
Mur Fostisyr
Ered Michrin
Rhûn
Rhovanion
Anduin
Sea of Rhûn
Wold
Rohan
Dagorlad
Desdursyron
Myr
Loran
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Kykurian Kyn



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